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Rep. Leger Fernández Introduced the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández (NM-03) and Representative Blumenauer (D-OR), the Co-Chair of the Historic Preservation Caucus, introduced the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act to provide permanent authorization to the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and double its deposits to \$300 million for each fiscal year. The bill would also make amounts in the HPF available for expenditure without further Congressional appropriations, providing certainty to preservation offices and programs across the country that rely on this critical funding.

“Our herencia, built over centuries, makes us who we are. We must protect, cherish, and pass this gift on for generations. It is our duty to preserve our history so that communities can see America’s greatest treasures and hear our saddest stories,” **said Leger Fernández.** “I am grateful that my parents instilled in me the importance of understanding the pain we have endured and what we can celebrate. I introduced the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act so that we can preserve places of struggle and perseverance across America.”

“When we preserve our historic places that might otherwise be lost forever, we celebrate and inform our heritage, strengthen our sense of place, and boost local economies through tourism and job creation,” **said Rep. Blumenauer, who co-chairs the Historic Preservation Caucus.** “After several years of growing funding for the Historic Preservation Fund, the time is ripe to provide greater support for its important programs.”

The HPF provides funding for State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, and several grant programs that support preservation projects across the country. These include those related to African American civil rights, disaster recovery, Tribal heritage, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

“The NMSHPO is grateful to Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez for pursuing permanent authorization of the Historic Preservation Fund. The State of New Mexico, not unlike other SHPOs, will benefit greatly by the enhanced appropriation to better serve the preservation needs of our state. Better still, with 16 active THPO’s, our tribal partners in New Mexico will also benefit and finally receive the financial support necessary to build their programs commensurate to the unique conditions on tribal lands.” **said Dr. Jeff Pappas, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer.**

“My sincere appreciation to Congresswoman Leger Fernández for introducing the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act. The authorization level of the HPF has not increased since its establishment in 1976, and since that time, it has never been fully appropriated. Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and State Historic Preservation Offices are the backbone of implementing the National Historic Preservation Act, and funding has fallen far short of the ever increasing demand. For the Pueblo of Zuni, and many other Tribes, the Tribal Historic Preservation Offices are a central element of cultural preservation and protecting ancestral sites, sacred places and traditional cultural properties upon which the Zuni stewardship responsibility to the ancestors is based. Permanent authorization and full funding at a higher level would begin to assist the Pueblo of Zuni in realizing their preservation goals, and I sincerely appreciate the Congresswoman’s understanding of the importance of this work,” **said Kurt E. Dongoske, National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, Board of Directors.**

“The National Trust for Historic Preservation is grateful for the leadership of Congresswoman Leger Fernández and we applaud her sponsorship of the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act, which will strengthen this country by honoring our past as an investment in our future. With this unprecedented level of support for the Historic Preservation Fund, enactment of this legislation will significantly enhance protection of our nation’s historic resources, ensuring that they will remain as vibrant assets for our communities going forward. In addition to implementing preservation programs nationwide, including historic tax credit projects and nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, the Historic Preservation Fund supports important competitive grant programs that help to preserve places all across the country that reveal a more inclusive shared story of who we are and how we can move forward together.” **said Paul W. Edmondson, President & CEO, National Trust for Historic Preservation.**

“The Historic Preservation Fund not only safeguards our country’s heritage: it fosters economic development, revitalizes communities and creates well-paying jobs. Cultural resource management companies like ACRA’s members know that the Fund is essential for carrying out programs that support the management of our historic places. By providing stable, long-term support for the Fund, the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act will help states, Tribes and local communities continue preserving our connections to

the past while investing in the future. We commend Rep. Leger Fernandez for her leadership in introducing this legislation and call on Congress to enact it this year." **said American Cultural Resources Association President Daniel Cassidy.**

"In 1976, Congress realized that in order to help identify and protect our nation's historic places, funding would be necessary. The Historic Preservation Fund was established to do just that in a unique partnership with state and tribal governments. If we expect our historic places to survive us, it is high time to make that commitment permanent. We thank Rep. Leger-Fernández for her leadership!" **said Erik Hein, Executive Director, National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.**

"Across the country, communities are utilizing the Historic Preservation Fund to revitalize downtowns and commercial corridors. The essential support provided by the HPF – available through competitive grant programs, support for statewide historic preservation offices, and certified local governments – helps communities leverage historic assets and create local economic vitality. Whether through rehabilitating the façade of a small business or adding upper floor housing, downtowns stand to benefit immensely from the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act. Main Street America applauds Representative Leger Fernandez's leadership of this legislation." **said Patrice Frey, President and CEO, Main Street America**

The legislation is supported by the organizations below:

- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers
- National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
- American Cultural Resources Association
- National Parks Conservation Association
- American Battlefield Trust
- Main Street America
- The Wilderness Society
- Preservation Action
- Society for American Archaeology
- Coalition for American Heritage
- National Preservation Partners Network

Before joining Congress, Congresswoman Leger Fernández was appointed by President Obama to serve as Vice Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

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